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Mahathir-Corruption

CORRUPTION WILL DESTROY US, WARNS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned the people today that the country will be destroyed if there is widespread corruption which brings with it spiralling costs of goods and services and corrupt people running the government.

He said there were more dangers from corruption than what the people perceived as the scourge would stifle the country's growth and everyone would end up poor.

The prime minister said if corruption became a culture, all costs from the affairs of government to production of goods and services would escalate.

" All will become poor even if they have a high income because everything will become expensive," he said when opening the annual Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

Dr Mahathir said: "Those who are involved in corrupt practices will also face the consequences because they will live in a backward and poor country and they will be humiliated by the people and other countries".

Corruption would also cause work to take much longer to complete and lead to uncertainties in all forms of dealings either in terms of costs or time.

Dr Mahathir, who in a similar presidential policy address last year fought back tears when he spoke of money politics in Umno, explained in detail how corrupt practices could destroy the country if corruption had spread up to ministers, the prime minister and the private sector.

He said that graft would make people greedy, dishonourable and unfit to be elected party and government leaders.

" This kind of people will surely abuse their power to enrich themselves when they are in office and to ensure they get continued support from the people."

"The people will be bribed with government money which should otherwise be spent on development of the country, and for the wellbeing of the people to ensure a good life for all of us," he said.

The prime minister said because the elements of corruption had to be added to all dealings, everything would be expensive.

"Even the office boy can force a bribe out of customers who want some services. And those at the top won't stop the office boy from accepting the bribe because they too want their share. " And so up to the level of ministers or the prime minister. People at the top who accept bribes which are known to all officers and their staff are not likely to stop those under them from doing the same," he said.

Dr Mahathir said all costs of dealings with the government would increase because of corrupt money paid at all levels -- officers, staff and ministers.

" Then banks too get involved and there will be additional costs of capital and loans apart from the interest cost. Bribery to bank officers which is known as football money was very widespread not too long ago.

"When certain goods are in short supply and difficult to get, bribes need to be paid to obtain them even from the traders themselves. So also with all essential services, whether from the government or private sector," he said.

But the prime minister said that corruption was not the only "culture" that could destroy a country and as such, many other malpractices and bad values also had to be wiped out.

" But we cannot be passive, only protecting ourselves from negative things. If we aspire to progress we need to plan and execute strategies that can make us progressive," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there were those who even promoted the idea that the people should be contented with what they had by arguing that this had already been fated and that they should be thankful.

He described as bad values popularly-held belief like: "if you are fated to have a pint you won't have a gallon; poverty in this world will be repaid with wealth in the next world; humiliation in this world will be repaid with honour in the next world".

He said if the people did not work hard, were easily contented, extravagant and thought nothing of indulging in vice, then they had no sense of dignity.

"Even the little prosperity that we have now is enough to destroy our morals and that of our younger generation. They indulge in vice, drugs and other things.

" Are we confident that the achievements that we have made so far are sustainable by those who inherit us," asked the prime minister.--BERNAMA

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